THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) SKO & LPG are deficit products in the country. In order to meet their demand in the country, Government approval is given annually to import of these products for sales under administered prices. A quantity of 3396 TMT of SKO and 1464 TMT of LPG has been proposed to be imported by PSUs during the current financial year. Both SKO & LPG are decanalised items and are also imported through parallel marketing.

West Coast Refinery Project in the Ratnagiri District

3590. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been a delay in the West Coast refinery project coming up in the Ratnagiri district;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to ensure that there are no disruptions in the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R.BAALU): (a) to (c) The Oman Oil Company (OOC) the Joint Venture Partner with HPCL in the West Coast Refinery Project, have decided to review their interest in Hindustan Oman Refinery Project in view of their various commitments.

A joint venture enquity participation from suitable partner (s) is being vigorously explored by HPCL.

Supply of Natural Gas for Ceramic Complex

3591. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH:
SHRI GOVINDRAM MIRI:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to provide natural gas to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for development of ceramic complex;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) to (c) There is no proposal to provide natural gas to Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for development of ceramic complex as the gas projected to be available is fully allocated and it is not feasible to make additional allocations at present.

Discovery of New Gasfields by International Experts

3592. SHRI BRATIN SENGUPTA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are unable to increase indigenous natural gas supplies unless new gasfields are discovered; and

(b) whether it is also a fact that Government have been unable to discover new fields on their own; if so, the reasons for not inviting international experts for this purpose?

THE MINIISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R.BALLU): (a) The production of natural gas in the country has gone up from around 49 MMSCMD in 1992-93 to around 62 MMSCMD in 1996-97. The production is estimated to go up further to around 85 MMSCMD by the end of the 9th plan period.

(b) ONGC and OIL have added around 45 billion cubic metres of recoverable gas reserves in the first four

years of the 8th plan period. The opinion of international experts are taken as and when required.

Indo-Oman Gas Pipeline

3593. SHRI RAM GOPAL YADAV:
SHRI ISH DUTT YADAV:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken a policy decision to lay the pipeline for natural gas between India and Oman; if so, whether the feasibility of the project was considered;

(b) whether Government had discussed the matter with the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of Oman during the last week of March, if so, the details and the outcome thereto; and

(c) what steps Government are considering to take on the feasibility of this ambitious project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BALLU): (a) to (c) In terms of the Agreement on Principal Terms signed with Oman in 1994, the Oman Oil Company took up the feasibility study for the Oman India Gas Pipeline. The feasibility study is yet to be completed. A Joint working Group has been formed between GAIL and Oman Oil Company to expedite the feasibility study and to identify possible sources of finance for the project.

Gas Reserve along Orissa Coast

3594. SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether gas reserves have been detected along Orissa Coast;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the investment plans for extracting gas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

East Coast Refinery Plan

3595. SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the East Coast Refinery Plan has been approved;

(b) if so, the details thereof, indicating its site and by when the work of the project would start; and

(c) by when it would start functioning?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERTOLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Indian Oil Corporation has in Principle approval to set up a 6 MMTPA joint venture refinery in the East Coast. IOC has submitted a Detailed Feasibility Report which includes the subject of site selection and the same is under process of investment approvals. The implementation of the project is expected to take approximately 46 months for mechanical completion from the date of Government approval.

Setting up of Central Electricity Regulatory Commission

3596. SHRI VEDPRAKASH P. GOYAL: Will the PRIME MINIISTER be pleased to refer to answer to Unstared Question 1400 given in the Rajya Sabha on the 6th March, 1997 and state:

(a) what is the present stage of the proposal to create Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC);